

***“Living by Faith in the
Workplace: Part II”***

Ephesians 6:5-9

February 8, 2009

“Employees & Employers”

The reason I think it's justified for us to read these verses as referring to 'employees and employers' is not because slave and master relationships were like this in the ancient world, but because this is the reality of our cultural situation and I think Paul would have us capitalize on that reality.

I Have a Concern...

- ...that some will hear this message and the last one and dismiss them as nothing more than religious platitudes, which is to say, things that sound nice in church but have no relation to life as it is in the real world.
- But neither Paul nor I are speaking in platitudes, we're co-laboring to help you see reality.
- A woman once said in answer to the question, "What do you do for work," "I'm an ambassador of Jesus Christ cleverly disguised as a check out clerk!"

I Have a Concern...

- Apple trees bear apples because they're apple trees, and if they don't something is seriously wrong. This same is true of Christians.
- Of course, we're a mixed bag but Christ is faithful: “

I Have a Concern...

“A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’” (Luke 13:6-9)

Three Lessons...

1. Trees are supposed to bear fruit and when they don't something is seriously wrong.
2. When a tree doesn't bear fruit overtime the Lord will cut it down and remove it from the ground.
3. The Lord is immensely patient and he gives more than enough time for problems to be corrected so that those of us who ought to bear fruit do in fact bear fruit.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Colossians 1:13-14

“¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

1 Peter 2:9-10

“⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

The Christian's Creed in the Workplace

“I belong to Christ, I am his ambassador, and my job is to spread his fame and glorify his Name!” (1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:9-10).

Ephesians 6:9

“Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.”

The Positive Command:

“Masters, do the same to them...”

This doesn't mean “Masters, obey your slaves as well,” but rather, “lead your slaves with the same disposition as they're to follow you.”

The Positive Command:

1. With “fear & trembling”
2. With “sincerity of heart”
3. With “a good will”
4. Without being a “people-pleaser”
5. Knowing your reward is in heaven

The Negative Command:

“Masters...stop your threatening...”

I think this means, “Don’t use your power to force compliance, rather treat those under you as you would want to be treated.” (See Col. 4:1

Luke 22:25-27

“²⁵ The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. ²⁷ For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”

Two Foundational Truths:

1. "...knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven..."
2. "...and that there is no partiality with him."